251   DESIGN EXCEPTIONS

The Roadway Predesign Section is required to request design exceptions whenever a Federally-funded reconstruction project is not going to bring a roadway feature(s) up to current AASHTO standards. These roadway features are identified by Predesign after the project scope has been defined. Justification for not bringing a roadway feature up to current standards includes studying the 5-year accident history for that section of roadway. A design exception should not be granted if there is a discernible accident pattern clearly related to the roadway geometrics.

Examples of features which may be uneconomical to bring up to current standards are shoulder width, vertical and horizontal curvature, and superelevation. In most cases, the roadway geometrics did not contribute to the accidents, and it should be so stated in a report.

If there is a discernible accident pattern clearly related to a roadway feature, a recommendation should be made for a safety improvement to be included in the project scope. This improvement may not be bringing the feature up to current standards; it may be an interim improvement such as shoulder rumble strips, chevron alignment signs, raised pavement markers, or wider edgeline striping. The feasibility of utilizing HES safety funds for improvements may be evaluated also. The State Traffic Engineer shall approve all recommendations to Predesign for safety improvements resulting from design exception requests.

Report format examples are available from the Traffic Engineering Group. Reports should include:

- project limits
- reiteration of design exceptions requested
- 5 year accident period studied
- summary of all accidents
- explanation of each fatal accident.

And either:

- statement that roadway geometrics did not contribute to the accidents, or
- recommendation for a safety improvement either to be included in the project scope or to be funded with HES safety funds.

The person who prepared the report should sign it prior to sending it to the Roadway Predesign Section.